

To Mr. Gregory, State Representative for Winston County,  
my home county, Thank you Mr. Gregory.

Mr. Nicholson, who servers as State Representative for  
Newton County which is home for East Central  
Community College.

Dr. Phil Sutphin, President of East Central Community  
College.

Mrs. Ann Burkes and Mr. Bubby Johnston of East Central  
Community College. Thank you for helping to gather and  
organize the information for this very special occasion.

To East Central current and former Faculty members who  
are here today to give me moral support.

It is my pleasure to be here today.

This is my first time to be in this chamber and my second time to be in the Capitol Building, as I was honored here several years ago as a Headwae instructor.

I am a product of public education.

My education began in a rural 3 teacher 8<sup>th</sup> grade school.

Later, I was bused to Louisville City School. As a city school, many of the school activities were held after school. Since I had to ride the yellow bus home and help with farm chores, I missed most of the school activities.

East Central Junior College was my way out. For me and many others who could not attend a Senior College, East Central offered us a future. East Central provided me the <sup>with</sup> foundation and opportunity to continue my studies.

After graduating from East Central, I attended Mississippi Southern, where the doors literally flew open for me.

My major at Mississippi Southern was health, physical education and recreation. Many of my professors were World War II Veterans with Doctorate degrees from Columbia University. Columbia University was a teacher college and the first University to grant a doctorate degree ~~in health, physical education, and recreation~~. My professors were learned and they molded me into what I am today in the field of education; they directed my philosophy and my

training. I was taught that I was not to be just a P. E. teacher, but a physical educator with emphasis on education. My professors encouraged me to hold my degree with high esteem, as none was any better---- I was taught to teach, instruct and educate my students.

I would like to thank Co-Lin for taking a chance on a 23 year old, without any experience. Clearly Co-Lin directed my professional career.

Three years later, I heard the call from my Alma Mater, East Central, to return. Most importantly, East Central provided me with the opportunity to not only teach physical education activity classes and coach, but to also go into the classroom.



My love is the classroom - even though I teach two fitness and conditioning classes – I find that the classroom offers me my greatest challenge.

I continue to answer the calling to teach, to instruct and to educate my students.

In my earlier years – I asked a girl from Nanih Waiya (Mr. Gregory's territory) – “Which way did she live from Louisville?” ( I knew that Nanih Waiya was Southeast of Louisville).

She said, “Well, I’m down here and all turned around and I don’t know which way I live from Louisville.”

Even today, many of our students are lost and do not know their way – That is my job, to help advise and most of all be a good listener.

If the Lord is willing, Monday morning and every morning at 7 a.m., I will be there for our students and they know that they are welcome to come to my office.

Throughout my education, there have been many hills and valleys. However, being here today and representing East Central, overshadows many of those dark days.

Being here in this State House is such an honor. My heart has been Blessed and the memories of this day will stay fresh in my mind for the years to come.

I Thank you.



BlueCross BlueShield  
of Mississippi

P.O. Box 1043  
Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1043  
Telephone: (601) 952-3704  
[www.bcbsms.com](http://www.bcbsms.com)

September 22, 2005

Ovid S. Vickers  
[REDACTED]

Decatur, Mississippi 39327-0841

Dear Mr. Vickers:

It was a pleasure to honor you as one of Mississippi's Ageless Heroes in 2005. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi appreciates your service as a role model for your generation.

Because of your active and healthy lifestyle, we know you surround yourself with "heroes" every day. We need your help in locating other outstanding seniors in your community and making sure they are nominated for this prestigious award. You can nominate these individuals yourself or encourage others in your community to fill out a form.

We have enclosed several nomination forms that highlight the program and explain how to submit an individual for consideration for you to use. Additional forms and more information about the program can also be obtained from our company website at [www.bcbsms.com](http://www.bcbsms.com), or by calling 1-800-222-1331.

You will notice a few changes on the nomination form. The categories of Community Involvement and Good Neighbor have been combined into one. Keep this in mind when you're considering someone to nominate. Everything else is basically the same.

Thanks again for being an example for others as one of Mississippi's outstanding Ageless Heroes. We look forward to receiving some nominations from your hometown.

Sincerely,  
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris".

Chris C. Carmichael  
Community Affairs Coordinator

Enclosures



BlueCross BlueShield  
of Mississippi

P.O. Box 1043  
Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1043  
Telephone: (601) 932-3704  
www.bcbsms.com

November 18, 2005

Ovid Vickers  
[REDACTED]

Decatur, Mississippi 39327-

Dear Mr. Vickers:

Thank you for nominating Lucille Wood for the Mississippi Ageless Heroes Program. The program was created by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi to recognize the inspirational achievements of people age 65 and older. We appreciate the opportunity to honor people whose generous spirit and active, healthy lifestyles are examples for us all.

We want to inform you of the time frame for the program. The nomination forms are currently being collected and organized by region and category. They will be distributed to the judges for consideration in mid December. The judges always have a difficult time selecting the honorees, since we usually receive over 400 nominations.

All winners will be notified in January 2006. You will learn the status of your nominee by mail in early February. At that time, a list of winners will be sent to everyone who submitted a nomination.

Thank you again for your nomination. We wish them the best of luck.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia Hooks".

Virginia Hooks  
Special Project Coordinator  
Corporate Communications



Lucille Wood, a native of Louisville, Mississippi, is an outstanding teacher who at age 74 enthusiastically continues to carry out her duties as a member of the faculty at East Central Community College. She is an inspiration to the student body and to her colleagues. She takes her motto from Robert Browning, "Grow old along with me; The best is yet to be."

In August 2005, Miss Wood began her 52<sup>nd</sup> year of teaching in the Mississippi community college system and is now the longest-tenured community college instructor in Mississippi. She is Chairman of the Business, Social Science and Education Division and teaches a full load of classes. Miss Wood serves as sponsor of the Student Education Association and as advisor to the Physical Education, Recreation, and Sports Medicine majors.

In 2003, Miss Wood was recognized by the Mississippi Humanities Council with the Outstanding Teachers Award and received the "Power of One" Award at the Mississippi Women's Conference. Also, in 2003, she was invited by the Board of Trustees to deliver the keynote address for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary convocation at East Central, her alma mater.

In 2004 in recognition of her outstanding career as a women's basketball coach, she was inducted into the National Junior College Women's Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame, an honor which, in the history of the organization, has been bestowed on fewer than 40 women coaches. She served as the NJCAA Region 23 Director from 1987 until 1997.

She was presented the Red Rose Award by Xi Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma and is active in the Friends of the Winston County Library.

Recently, she successfully spearheaded a drive to raise \$15,000 to establish a memorabilia room for the preservation of publications, papers, and objects related to the history of East Central Community College.



2005 Central  
Region Honoree  
Ovid S. Vickers  
Decatur

# 2005

Mississippi  
Ageless Heroes  
Awards Luncheon



AGELESS  
HEROES

BlueCross BlueShield  
of Mississippi



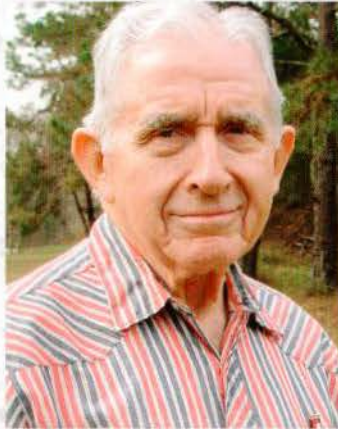


## 2005 Central Region Honorees

### **Murray S. Griffin**

81, of Utica, *Good Neighbor*

Murray Griffin is described as a busy, energetic man who never seems to say no. At the age of 81, this World War II veteran and retired engineer will give rides, build wheelchair ramps, and design and help build anything that's needed. Griffin engineered and helped build the Utica Community Veterans Memorial, both of Utica's Habitat Homes, and has been responsible for the physical layouts for the Utica Heritage Festival for the past five years. Griffin says, "Become involved in an organization where you have an interest and feel you could make a contribution."



### **Ovid S. Vickers**

74, of Decatur, *Love of Learning*

At age 74, Ovid Vickers continues each day to share his innate talents as a writer and speaker with audiences all across the state. Four weekly newspapers publish his feature column "The Second Time Around." He is a member of the Mississippi Humanities Council Speakers Bureau, a published poet, and a founding member of the Mississippi Folklore Society. "Until I look in the mirror, I never think of myself as being old," says Vickers. "I always have a project, an engagement, or a trip to look forward to, and I continue to be involved in professional endeavors."



2006 Statewide  
Honoree  
Lucille Wood  
Louisville, MS

# 2006

## Mississippi Ageless Heroes Awards Luncheon



BlueCross BlueShield  
of Mississippi



## 2006 Statewide Honoree - Love of Learning

### Lucille Wood

75, of Louisville

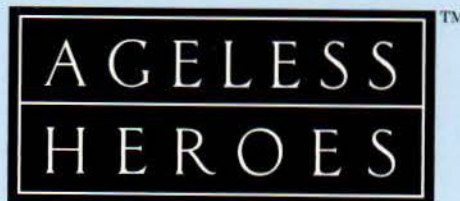


Lucille Wood enthusiastically continues teaching at the age of 75. The East Central Community College faculty member takes her life's motto from Robert Browning, "Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be..."

Wood began her 52nd year of teaching in 2005 and is the longest tenured community college instructor in Mississippi. She is the chairman of the Business, Social

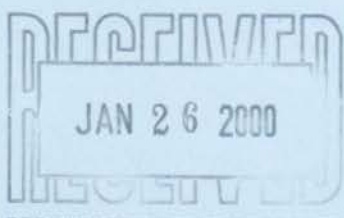
Science and Education Division, and teaches a full load of classes. She served as the school's women's basketball coach for 29 years, beginning in 1957. At that time women's basketball wasn't recognized as a sport by the Mississippi Junior College Athletic Association, so Wood coached a "club team" until 1975 when the Title IX ruling opened the doors for women's athletics. In 2004, Wood was inducted into the National Junior College Women's Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame.

Wood said, "The age you are is the best age to be. I keep my brain active and alert and I try to do things for others. By doing this, there is no time to think about oneself or the fact that one is growing older. Live in the present and not the past."



New.  
Beginnings  
Vitality + Love of.  
Good + Learning  
Neighborhood + Community  
Involvement

# Awards Luncheon





## Good Neighbor

### Mary Oakley, 74, of Starkville

Mary Oakley "keeps on giving when everybody else has gotten up and gone." That's what one neighbor had to say about Mary, a selfless contributor to the quality of life in the rural community of Oktoc, near Starkville.

She and her husband Warren played a major role in establishing the Oktibbeha County Volunteer Fire Department, which brought a once divided community together to achieve a common goal. "Neighbor helping neighbor" is the department's motto, a philosophy Mary embodies every day.

Whenever a need arises, Mary can be counted on to pitch in. She has served as the recording secretary for the volunteer fire department since its inception and helps hold elections conducted in the District 5 Volunteer Station. She recently designed and pieced a quilt to raffle at the annual community fund-raiser that she helped establish 30 years ago. "I make it a point every day to do something that needs to be done," says Mary. "I look more to the future than dwelling on the past, for that's where I will spend the rest of my life."

## Love of Learning

### Lorene Graham, 81, of Conehatta

Almost 65 years ago, Lorene Graham left school at age 16 to follow her heart. She married her high school sweetheart and settled into life as a devoted preacher's wife. She says she never minded the sacrifice, perhaps, because she knew she would some day return to the classroom — as a 74-year-old seeking her G.E.D.

Less than three months after enrolling in an adult education center, Lorene earned her diploma and set her sights on another goal — a college degree. Joining the freshman class at East Central Community College wasn't easy — especially considering her first course involved computers.

But bolstered by her family's faith in her and the admiration of her much younger classmates, Lorene became the oldest person to receive a degree in the history of ECCC. And it was a degree with honors. Lorene was inducted into the two-year college honor society Phi Theta Kappa, becoming the oldest member ever inducted into a Mississippi chapter.

Lorene advises others to: "Turn your life over to God and be sweet and helpful to people." And it's a philosophy she lives by, as well. Lorene now drives over 40 miles a day to help other students at the G.E.D. Center achieve their dreams. "I look at aging as a wonderful time to be a light to the younger generation," says Lorene. "They need us older people as role models. These are the golden years and we should try to make them the best ever."